



7 September 2021

Marines,

Over the past two weeks we have had the opportunity to visit with some of your brothers and sisters recently wounded in Afghanistan. As anyone who knows Marines would expect, every one of them is eager to get back to their units as quickly as possible. All are positive, optimistic, and proud of their recent service. They should be. These Marines, with Sailors, Soldiers, and Airmen, helped nearly 130,000 people find a better, freer life in the largest non-combatant evacuation operation in history.

They also grieve for the Marines who did not make it home. We all do. As we mark the 20th anniversary of 9/11, we remember Marines like these – like you – who were willing to go to the hard places at the hard times on behalf of our country. In Afghanistan, like so many other theaters, you served honorably and courageously, doing all that was asked of you and more. From Camp Rhino in 2001, to Kabul in 2021, Marines made a difference.

While Afghanistan may be fresh in our minds, the impact of your service over these last two decades extends far beyond a country, region, or mission set. Since 9/11, you have deployed to every clime and place, distinguishing yourselves in both combat and crisis. From battlefields in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, to counterterrorism support in Somalia and the Philippines, to relief operations in Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, Haiti, Nepal, Pakistan, and Liberia, to embassy reinforcement in the Central African Republic and Yemen, your courage, sacrifice, and example has been exemplary. You demonstrated to friend and foe alike that there is truly “No better friend, no worse enemy” than a United States Marine.

In the hours and days after the attacks of 9/11, an extraordinary number of Americans raised their right hands and took an oath to support and defend the Constitution. Many are now retiring, having spent their entire careers in the same conflict – unprecedented in the history of our Corps. On this anniversary, whether you have served for 20 years or 20 days, we encourage you to join your fellow Americans in quiet remembrance. Reflect on the sacrifice of others, connect with your fellow Marines, shipmates, and their families, and remain steadfast in your commitment to country and Corps. America expects her Marines to be most ready when the Nation is least ready – a solemn duty we all must fulfill while we have the watch.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. H. Berger".

David H. Berger
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Troy E. Black".

Troy E. Black
SgtMaj, U.S. Marine Corps
Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps